

TESTIMONY
of
John M Whitcomb

Before the Select Committee on Aging
of the
Connecticut General Assembly

January 27, 2009

Chairpersons Prague, Serra and Honorable Members of the Select Committee on Aging; my name is John M Whitcomb. I am here today to testify on SB 452, An Act Concerning Funding for Adult Day Care Centers.

I am here in the role of citizen, taxpayer and as a believer in limited government and fiscal control. I have no direct role regarding this bill; but, I am here in support of it.

My wife suffers from advanced early onset Alzheimer's disease. She attends the Almost Home Adult Medical Daycare Center in Danbury. We are private payers, not covered under Title XIX, although my wife is disabled under Social Security. So we do not directly benefit from this change. We must pay out of our savings.

Two high cost scenario's for health care of the disabled are 1) full-time nursing home care or 2) pushing otherwise healthy, productive and eager to work taxpayers out of gainful employment and forcing financial ruin upon

them as fulltime personal caregivers. One of the most cost effective methods of health care services to the disabled is through daycare / homecare. We should maximize availability of cost effective solutions.

In this time of fiscal crisis, it is important to wisely control expenditures. By making daycare services as accessible as possible, the state is helping to control cost. This parallels the well known fact that preventive health care is much more economical than emergency health care.

This economic comparison doesn't even touch on the important issue of quality of life. My wife's attendance at Almost Home Daycare clearly improves her quality of life. But additionally, being a care-giver as I am, is a very high stress circumstance. I am certain that my stress and health are adversely impacted -- impacting my productivity, and my ability to earn and pay taxes. It is also logical to assume there are short and long term health care cost ramifications for me personally. (In fact, though it is beyond the scope of this legislation, I believe a much more comprehensive and integrated approach to long term care can be developed in a manner that would have a favorable total cost impact).

This legislation is but a small step. Already the state is getting a significant discount below the rates that private payors must pay. And I am certain that other witness can testify to the costs of care to the providers. My point

is the cost benefit to taxpayers, and the need in the community. Thank you for listening to reasons that I support this legislation.

In a matter not directly related to this, I am the state legislative director of the Connecticut Council of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), and will mention that the national organization is conscious of HB 5312, also being heard before this Committee today. Enhancing background checks for employees of homemaker-companion agencies appears to be a sound move.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time and if you have questions or concerns at a future date please do not hesitate to contact me.

John M Whitcomb

Taxpayer